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A certaine Relation of the Hog- faced Gentlewoman called Mistris Tannakin Skinker, who was borne at *Wirkham*

a Neuter Towne betweene the Emperour and the
Hollander, scituate on the river *Rhyne*.

Who was bewitched in her mothers wombe in the yeare 1618.
and hath lived ever since unknowne in this kind to any,
but her Parents and a few other neighbours. And
can never recover her true shape, tell she
be married, &c.

*Also relating the cause, as it is since conceived, how her mother
came so bewitched.*



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on Snow-hil neare St. Sepulchers Church. 1640.

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A certaine Relation of the Honorable Gentlewoman, called

Takin Skinker, who was borne at *Wirkham*,
a neuter Towne betweene the Emperour
and the *Hollander*.



Rodigies have bin in many or the most times, and prodigious births almost in all ages. For the first, the best Authors affirme, that when the *Tarquins* were banisht *Rome*, a Serpent was heard to barke, and a Dogge to speake; and that in the second punick Warre, an Oxe pronounced these words, *Cave tibi Roma*. Three Suns were seene at once, when *Spurius Posthumus* and *Quintus Nimitius* were Consulls; and three Moones when *Curius Dometius*, and *Lucius Aneus* bore the like Authority: Milke and blood, Wooll, and peeces of Flesh have dropt from the Clouds upon the earth in severall showers; burning Shields have bin seene in the ayre; sbattering fire from the setting of the Sun, to the breake of day; with a noise of the clashing of armour, and the sound of Trumpets, and other Military instruments. &c. And in the *Mutinenian* Fields, two great Mountaines removed the one towards the other; and fought a terrible combate; fire

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and smoake being seeing to issue from either, in whose meeting all the neighbour and adjacent Villages, were not onely shaken, but utterly demolisht; and all the Animals both men, and beasts, within many furlongs of that prodigious conflict, were exeniated and slaine. Infinite almost are the Histories of the like presidents, which for brevities sake I omit; let therefore these few suffice for many.

I come now to prodigious Births, of which this woman now in agitation is the sole Argument; and that it may appeare the more probable, to any that shall call the truth thereof in question; I shall intreate such but to looke backe into the Histories of the times past. *Herodatus*, and divers Authors have left recorded; that when *Xerxes* first prepared his Invincible Army to invade *Greece*, a Mare instead of a Colt, brought forth an Hare, which was a presage of his flight, and base defeat. In the yeare of Grace on thousand foure hundred fifty sixe, *Calixtus* the third, then being Pope, a Cow brought forth a Calfe with two heads, and bodies incorporate in one; and in the Isle of *Cous* in *Greece*, an Ewe, of the flocke of one *Nicippus* an Heardsman, eaned a Lion; which was as a prediction that he should attaine to the Sovereignty thereof, which accordingly hapned: neither neede wee much to question these, when our owne Native soyle, and these our Moderne times, have produc'd the like brutish monsters; publicly to be seene in all parts of the City and Suburbes, &c.

But I come now to humane Births, beginning with those forraigne, and ending with the domesticke; about the beginning of the Marfick Warre, one *Alcippe*, a woman of especiall note, at the time of her childing, was delivered of an Elephant; and another (whose name is not left unto us of) a Serpent. In *Thessaly*, one was brought to bed of an infant which had the shape of an Hypocentaure, and expired the same day that it received breath. And in the yeare that *Haniball* besieged and utterly subverted *Saguntus*: a woman of the same City brought forth a Son, which was no sooner borne, but voluntarily and of its owne accord, crept backe into the mothers wombe.

Albertus

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Albertus Magnus writes of a woman in *Germany*, who brought into the world from her owne body fifty sonnes five at a birth, but not any of them lived to be three quarters of a yeere old. And *Avicen* telleth us of another who was delivered of two and twenty abortive Children at severall times, of all which not one of them breathe one vitall Aire.

I fall now immediately upon the party before prepounded. In a place in *Holland*, called *Wirkham*, being a neuter Towne; as lying betwixt *Holland* and those parts belonging to the Empire, on the River *Rhine*, lived on *Joachim Skinker*, whose wife name was *Parnel*, a man of good revenue, but of a great estate in money and cattile: these two having very lovingly lived together, without any issue, to succeed them in their goods and inheritance: it being, no small griefe unto them, that either strangers, or some of their owne ungrateful Kindred should after death enjoy those meanes, for which they had so laboriously travail'd: when they were in their greatest despaire, it hapned thus, she found her selfe conceived with childe, which was a greater joy and comfort to her and her husband: But whether they were unthankful for such an unexpected blessing, or what other thing was the cause, I am not able to determine: but so it hapned, that in the yeere 1618, she was safely delivered of a Daughter, all the limbes and lineaments of her body, well featur'd and proportioned, only her face, which is the ornament and beauty of all the rest, had the Nose of a Hog, or Swine: which was not only a stain and blemish, but a deformed uglinessse, making all the rest lothsome, contemptible and odious to all that lookt upon her in her infancie.

If the joy of the parents was great in the hope of a Childe, how much greater may wee conjecture their sorowes were, to be the parents of such a monster: but considering with themselves what Heavens would have, they had not power to hinder, and studying (as farre as in them lay) to conceale their shame, they so farre meditated with the Midwife and the other women that were present at the

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delivery, that they should keepe it as close and secret as it was possible to doe: and they called the name of it *Tannakin*, which is as much in English as *Anne*, or *Hannah*.

This prodigie *Ravifus Textor* also remembreth us of a female Monster called *Marin*, who from the navill upward, had the effigies of a faire and beautifull woman, but from thence downward had the true shape of a well proportioned Mare, with foure feet, a taile, and every limbe and member corresponding to an Equinall figure, who lived an hundred 23 yeeres. In the Bishopricke of *Colen* a woman, some thinke a Witches Curse, some otherwise, brought forth into the World at one birth one hundred threescore and five children: all which though they were of wondrous small stature, yet they were borne with life, and christned, and a monument remaynes for them to this day, her prayer or curse being, that shee might have as many children at one birth, as there were dayes in the yeere. Monsters have been borne within these few yeeres in *Virginia*, *New England*, and other Colonies of our own Plantation, of which it is now too long to insift. And the like prodigious is now, that a Gentleman of quality within these moneth died, who being opened, in his heart was found a worne in the forme of a Serpent, which stretched out, was found to be sixteene inches long.

But if we shall be any way jealous of the trruth of reverent Antiquity, let us but looke backe upon our selves, I will give unto you a few instances for many: not to speake of those which have preposterously come into the world with their Feet forward, and born with Teeth in their head, as *Richard* the Third of that name King of *England*, and others. Twin Children have beene borne amongst us with two heads and bodies from the Gird lested upward, and but two legs and feet to support them both, and when one of them dyed, the other survived, but not many houres after: A Scotch childe, about two yeeres since, was to be seen in *Bartholomew* Faire, a Girle about the age of seven yeeres, who was so hairy, hands, armes, face, and body, that
you

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you would have thought *Orson* to have bin her Father, and
some she Beare her mother, yet she had her speech, senses,
and all other departments of a child of her age; who
had bin well educated and instructed. But to leave all di-
gression and come to the purpose now in hand, I will onely
remember unto you a very handsome young man, late (if
not now) in Towne, whose picture hath bin publickely
set out to the common view, and him selfe to bee seene for
money; who from one of his sides hath a twin brother
growing, which was borne with him, and living still;
though having sence and feeling, yet destitute of reason and
understanding: whence me thinkes a disputable question
might arise, whether as they have distinct lives, so they are
possessed of two soules; or have but one imparted betwixt
them both: but of this let the Philosophers, or rather the
Divines argue and Define, being I must ingeniously con-
fesse an Argument much above my element.

This prodigious birth though it was knowne to some
few, yet was it not made popular & spoken of by all, which
the Father and mother, for their owne reputations and cre-
dits were very carefull to maintaine; so that it was never
seene by any (being an infant bare fac'd) but vaild and
covered, and so brought up in a private Chamber, both fed
and taught by the Parents onely; and her deformity scarce
knowne to any of the Servants: and as the daughter grew
in stature, so the Father also increased with wealth; so that
he was accounted to be one of the richest men in all that
Country. Now how she came to be borne with such defor-
mity, there be divers and sundry conjectures; but if we may
Judge the cause by the effect, and of the preceedent by the
subsequent; most probable it is that it came by Witchcraft:
And that there be such, we have manifest prooffe; for in
Skedam in *Holland*; there is scarce a man or woman but
they are either *Magt*, or *Saga*; that is, men or women
witches: but for the last wee neede no further witnesse,
then that of the *Lancashire* witches some few yeares since:
of which I make no doubt, but this whole City hath taken
especial notice of. &c. Now whether Witches have
power

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power to effascinate an infant in the wombe of the mother may be a question; of which after some illustrations by knowne examples (without any tedious Deviation) I hope to gaine the Reader ample satisfaction.

History tells us that the Witch *Circe*, the daughter of *Sol*, and the Nimphe *Perfa*, who dwelt not farre from *Caietu*, a City of *Campania*, by her forceroous Spells and Incantations, changed divers of *Ulysses* his companions into Swine: if she had such power over the whole, no wonder then if a Witch in these dayes, by the helpe of her Father the Divell, cannot disguise the face which is but a part. It hath beene knowne also in our knowne Country, when a Gentlewoman of good discent and quality hath brought an infant into the World with a live Snake wrapt about the necke and body in memory of which, that Noble Family in the emblazon of their Armes, give the Snake ever unto this day: which accident is quite against nature, and therefore can be conferr'd upon nothing but Diabolicall Sorcery and Witchcraft. I could tell you of the like prodigious things done by *Medea*, *Misale*, *Erceto*, *Magun*, *Dipsas*, *Ariphala*, *Lo-custa*, *Guthurna*, *Canidia Neopolitana*, *Sagana*, *Vera*, *Folia*, and infinite others: but though I study brevity, give mee leave to give thee this short Character.

Their power is by the permission of the higher powers, and instigated by the malice of the Divells, to transhape men into beasts; make barren fields, blast Corne, unfructify Trees, parch and wither Grasse and Hearbes; bring scabs and diseases upon men, and murraine and rot upon Heards and Flockes; effascinate the eyes, weaken the hands, benumbe the feete &c. Now to prove that this Child was bewitched in the wombe, there be these pregnant reasons following.

It is credibly reported, that this Burgers wife having conceived, an old woman suspected for a Witch, came to begge of her an Almes, but she being at that busied about some necessary affaires gave her a short and neglected answer; at which she went away muttering to her selfe the Divells *paternoster*, and was heard to say; *As the Mother is*
Hoggish,

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Hoggish, so Swinish shall be the Child shee goeth withall: which is a great probability that the infants deformity came by the malicious Spells, and diuinish murmurations of this wicked woman; who after for the like, or worse practises both upon men women and children, whom shee had bewitched unto death, being brought within the compasse of the Law; and after to suffer at the stake: amongst many other things confessed as much as I have before related; yet either out of her perverse obstinacy would not, or else (the Diuill forsaking her in extremitie, as he doth all his other seruants) in her deficiency of power, could not uncharme her; yet by this means that which was before kept so private, was now publickly discovered to the World; insomuch that much confluence of people came to see the progedy, which wearied the Father, and cast a blush upon the cheekes of the good woman the mother: some desirous to heare her speake, whose language was onely the Dutch Hoggish Houghs, and the Piggs French Owee, Owee, for other words she was not able to utter; which bred in some pittie, in others laughter, according to their severall dispositions.

Others were importunate to see her feede, then milke and the like was brought unto her in a silver Trough; to which she stooped and eate, just as a Swine doth in his swilling Tub; which the more mirth it bred in the Spectators, increased in the Parents the more melancholy: insomuch that he bethought himselfe to finde out some meanes, (if it were possible) either to mend or end his sorrowes. And to that purpose, hearing of a famous Artist, who was both a Mathematician, and an Astrologian (whose name was *Vandermaest*) and lived not farre from him; a man who was suspected to have bin well versed in blacke and hidden Arts: to him he repaired, and when he had made knowne his griefes by every circumstance; he desired of him some present remedy, for which hee would bee no way ingratefull.

Who after some pause told him, that after some houres attendance he would returne him an answer, the one way

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or the other; we gave him some smal satisfaction, though not full to his expectation : but having waited his leasure, hee returned according to the time prefixt, told him that hee could wish him to marry her at any rate whatsoever; for whilst she continued in the estate of a Virgin, there was no hope of her recovery; but if then she received any helpe, or he comfort, though both seemed beyond all hopes; yet he advised him patiently to attend the successe, but howsoever not to match her unto a Clowne, Bore, or Pefant; but to a gentleman at least. In which answer though he could presume of nothing (being so mistericall and doubtfull,) yet there was no reason for him to despaire of any thing: so that having bountiffully rewarded the Artist, hee repaired backe to his ownehouse, and acquainted his wife with the passage of the whole businesse; where they long consulted betwixt themselves, what were best in this difficult case to bee done.

After much reasoning *Pro* and *Con*, they concluded to put her into very rich and costly habit (but her face still vaild and covered) and to give out that what gentleman of fashion or quality soever, would take her to his bed after loyall Matrimony, (for she was at this time betwixt fixe-teene and seventeene yeares of age, and therefore marriageable) should receive for a Dowry with her, forty thousand pound, payed downe in Starling and Currant money. *This was a baite sufficient to make every Fish to bite at, for no sooner was this publickely divulged, but there came Suitors of all sorts; insomuch that his Gates were thronged as at an Outcry, or rather as a Lottery, every one in hope to carry away the great Prize of forty thousand pound; for it was not the person, but the prize at which they aimed.*

One thinks with him selfe, so the body bee handsome, though her countenance bee never so course and ugly, all are alike in the night; and in the day time, put her head but in a blacke bagge, and what difference betwixt her and another woman. Another comforteth him selfe thus: *That if shee cannot speake, shee cannot chide; and therefore shee shall be sure not to have a scold to his wife.* Another apprehends,

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hends, *That if shee feede but one wash and the like, shee will not be very chargeable to him for her Dyet: and therefore hee shall have a good bargaine by the match.*

These and the like inducements were so farre prevalent with them, that they came from divers places, and Countries, to sollicite her for marriage; some from *Italy*, some from *France*, some from *Scotland*, some from *England*, and every one of them howsoever debosht in their meanes, and more studdying upon her meanes then the maide, put their Fortunes upon the hazard of an handsome suite, to appeare like gentlemen; because otherwise they could have no admittance into her company.

But to give you better information, then by these suppositions, or rather stupid conceits for her order of Diet; *She doth eate all those meates which commonly we do feede on, and doth digest it very naturallly; onely shee doth feede in a Silver Trough, or Bole; which is alwayes carried with her wheresoever shee doth remove; and if shee doth want any thing that shee bath a mind unto, be it Apparrell, or Dyet, she doth write her mind; and by that meanes, (as wee are given to understand, by those which have seene her) she hath all things to her desire.*

Amongst some Sutors came a *Scotchman* being a Captaine, who having hazarded the greatest part of a months pay upon one Suite of Cloaths, was desirous to see this Gentlewoman, and was received by the Parents; who thinking him to be some great Leard in his Country, gave him generous entertainment: she was brought unto him with her face covered, and in an habit which might well have suited the greatest Lady in the Land; who admiring her feature and proportion, was much inamoured of her person, but desirous to see her face discovered, when hee beheld it; hee would stay no other conference, but ran away without further answer, saying; they must pardon him, for hee could indure no *Porke*.

Next came a Sowce-man, borne in *England*, having accomodated himselfe for the same adventure, and presuming that loving Sowce so well, no Hogs-face could affright him; he presently at the sight of her could endure her company

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pany no longer, and at his farewell, said, so long as I have known *Rumford*, I never saw such a Hogsnout, but whensoever my stomach shall serve for any such dish, I will never venter upon any raw, but I will be sure it shall be either well boyled or roasted.

A Taylor came, having borrowed (whether with leave, or without I know not) a costly suite of one of his best customers; and he vowed notwithstanding, all impediments whatsoever interdicting him, hee would enjoy her, and marry her, and sleep with her close as Hogs in pease-straw, but though hee liked her feature when her face was discovered, he gave back, and vowed he would not go through stich with any such businesse. I should but lose my selfe in writing, and tyre the Reader in turning over many Voluminous leaves of paper, to shew you here many severall men and of sundry conditions, came in a kinde of jealousy one of another, to purchase this masse or magazine of money; every one ambitious after the portion, but not one amongst them amorous of the person, whose countenance was so farre from seeming lovely to them, that it appeared altogether lothsome, and so I will leave her in this exigent, to acquaint you with a short story, that the carriage of the one, may make the other appeare more probable, they being of like affinity. My Authour is *John Gower*, and thus it hapned.

A noble and warlike Knight, Cousin to the Emperour *Claudius*, of a spirit undaunted, and honour unquestioned, named *Florentius*, as he rid upon an adventure, was taken prisoner by a Captain of a Castle, whose sonne hee had before slaine in battell, willing they were to put him to death, but they much feared the indignation and revenge of the Emperour his Uncle: and hee being then in their power, they held a consultation amongst themselves what was best to be done, and where divers projects were laid: the mother to this Captaine, and Grandmother to *Brun-cus* before by him slaine, said, That shee had a plot to make him accessary to his owne death without any displeasure from the Emperour or any of his noble Allies, nay, that he himselfe should assent thereunto without the least taxation of any injustice.

And

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And to that purpose, she sent for him out of prison, and thus said: Though for the death of my Grandchild, *Brun-cus* both his Father and my selfe might take just vengeance of thee, since thy life is forfeited into our hands. Yet upon condition, that thou wilt resolve me of one question, which I shall propound thee: thou shalt have liberty for three moneths; but if not in that space thou canst not give a full solution of my demand, thou shalt here take thy personall oath as thou art a Knight, to returne back again unto this Castle, where thou art now our prisoner and vassall, and yield thy selfe up to a voluntary death, freely acquitting us of the fact to thine Uncle the Emperour.

This being concluded, as well by oath as obligation in writing, sealed and subscribed, the question was, *What thing above all other, women most desire?* Imagine him now free, on horseback, and in his way to Court, where being arrived, and demanding of the wisest and gravest Philosophers, and others to be resolved in this point, and withall telling them of his own danger, if it were not answered. Every one were of severall opinions; one said Pleasure, another Pride, some that they desired most to be prayesd and flattered, so that in this diversity of censures, he was forc'd to depart thence unsatisfied: now he whose honour was more precious unto him then the preserving of a thousand lives, resolved to yield up his body according to covenant, and riding through a Forrest, some few leagues distant from the Castle, pondring a thousand things in his perplexed head, he casting his eye aside, spied an old withered and decrepit Hag of the most ugly and lothsome aspect that ever his eyes beheld, who stepping unto him, and taking his horse by the bridle, said: *Florens* I know thee, and that thou art now going to thy certain death, but be advised by me, and (upon condition) I will save both thy life and honour: Blame him not, if being now in his flourishing youth, he gave her a willing care, and cheerfully demanded of her what gift she would have? or what taske impose him? who presently answered: That when hee had resolved the Beldam of her question (by her means) and had gained his life and liberty, hee should returne to that place where hee then found

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found her, and from thence beare her to his place of residence, and make her his wife.

Which when he heard he was now in a double distraction, as preferring many deaths before such a loathsome and unequal match: and so left her without reply. But better considering with himselfe, that being so old she could not live long; and being married, it was in his power to mew her up from the sight of men: with other the like apprehensions, (and life being sweet) he turned backe, and swore by his Knight-hood, he would do all that she demanded: which being agreed betwixt them, she told him, that when the question was againe propounded: *What thing above all other, women most desire?* he should answer, *To have their Wills, and the Sovereignty over their Husbands.* Let us Imagine that by this he was acquit, though to the great indignation both of the Father and the Grandam, and came backe according to his Covenant, where he met with the former Hagge, of whom my Author in his old English, gives this description.

*She was the loathedst wight
That ever man cast on his Eye:
Her Nose baas, her browes hye;
Her Eyes small, and deepe set,
Her Cheekes beene with teares wet,
And rivling as an empty skinne,
Hanging downe unto the Chin:
Her lips shrunkn bin for age,
There was no grace in her visage:
Her front was narrow, her lookes hore;
She looketh forth as doth a More, &c.*

In whose sight she was so odious, that now he repenteth him that he had not suffered Death rather then bee so miserably disposed of. But shee, still urging him upon his Knightly promise, he was forc't in her torne and thredbare habit to take her up behind him: but so ashamed of his burthen, that he only travailed either through woods, or by Owle-light, till at length hee came to his owne Castle, where

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where necessity (though much against his will) compelled him to discover her unto the Ladie his sister, and other of his neare Allyes, who were all much astonished and grieved at his wretched fortune.

But she still hastning on the match, the day of marriage came, when the Ladyes striving to tricke her up in the richest habite and best ornaments they could devise, the more they stroved to beautifie her, the more ugly and deformed she appeared. Briefly, married they were, and bed-time came, heaven knowes to his small comfort, and lesse content: the Bride-chamber was prepared, and the rooms, according to the Brides appoyntment stucke full of lights. The doors are shut, to bed she goes, and urgeth him to make haste, and doe the office of an husband: who was no sooner laid by her side, with as much distance as was possible, shee pluckt him by the arme, and desired him to reach a Light; and if shee could receive no other favour at his hands, yet at least once more to looke upon her, and she would then acquit him of his promise.

This seeming to be an easie condition, he takes a light, and looking stedfastly upon her, he discovered a sweet yong Lady of an incomparable beauty and feature, the like to whom to his imagination he never had in his whole life time beheld: at which strange sight being much extasied, he grew as greatly Inamoured, in so much, that he beganne to court her, and offered to kisse her, &c. But she modestly putting him backe, said to him as followeth: *Sir, I am indeed no other than I now seeme unto you: and of these two things I give you free choise, whether I shall appeare to you thus as you now see me, yong, faire, and lovely in your bed, and all the day time, and abroad, of my former deformity: or thus beautifull in the day, to the sight of your friends, but in your armes every night of my former Age and Uglinesse: of these two things I give you free choise of, which till you have resolv'd me. there can be no other familiarity betwixt us: therefore without pause give me a speedy answer.*

This more then all the rest distracted him: For what was her beauty to him in the night, if she appeared to all his friends

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friends so loathsome by day? or what was her faire feature to him, either abroad amongst his friends, or at board, if she were so odious to him in bed? therefore he said unto her: Sweet and delicate Lady, I am confounded in your question; nor know I what to answer; but into your owne hands and choyse I give the full power and soveraignty to make election of which you best please; At which words she lovingly turned towards him, and said: *Now Sir, you have given me that which all women most desire, my Will, and Sovereignty; and know I am the Kings daughter of Sicily, who by a wicked and sorcerous step-dame was thus enchanted, never to returne to my pristine shape, till I was first married, and after had received such power from my Husband: And now from henceforth I shall be the same to you night and day, of that youth and lively-hood which you now see mee; till Time and Age breed new alteration, even to the last period of my life.* At which, how incredible his joy was, I leave to the opinion of the understanding Reader, who I hope will easily conceive what affinity this story may have with the former.

I should have spoken something of her residing in or about London, as of her being in *Black-Friers*, or *Covent-garden*, but I can say little: onely abundance of people doe resort to each place to enquire the truth: some have protested they have seene her, by the helpe of their acquaintance, and give this reason why she will not as yet be constantly in one place, because the multitude is so great that doe resort thither, that they dare not be knowne of her abiding, least by denying the sight of her, they that owe the house should have it pulled downe about their eares. Her portion is very large, it being 40000 pounds; she likewise goeth very gallant in apparrell, and very courteous in her kind to all. And whosoever shall in Pamphlet, or Ballad, write or sing otherwise than is discoursed of in this small Tract, they erre from truth: for what is here discovered, is according to the best, and most approved Intelligence.

FINIS.

